DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 250 408 UD 023 833

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TITLE Education for Diversity: The Challenge of Cultural Pluralism. Inaugural Lecture.
INSTITUTION Nottingham Univ. (England).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-85359-088-5
PUB DATE 26 Feb 82
NOTE 28p.; May be marginally legible due to small print.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Acculturation; *Cultural Pluralism; *Educational Objectives; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Multicultural Education; *Social Differences
IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain; *Societal Needs

ABSTRACT

In England, multicultural education is one of the most important focal points within the ongoing educational debate. To answer questions of practical policy, multicultural education may be viewed from the perspective of education as social process. More than simply pupils and teachers, classrooms and textbooks, education provides social continuity and engenders social change. A process linked to powerful structural and ideological variables in the wider society, education may vary according to the importance placed upon indivudual development compared with the perceived needs of society. As a result of this dichotomy, all educational systems must strike a balance between educating for variety and educating for conformity, between diversity and cohesion. In a culturally pluralistic society, the tensions between these poles are particularly great: a plural society is, by definition, more diverse and thus has a greater need for conformity, yet it also has a greater natural resistance to conformity. British educationalists are now faced with deciding at what point the acculturation necessary for full participation in society becomes a repressive assimilation, and at what point the celebration of diversity ceases to enrich and becomes potentially divisive. Diversity and conformity are in fact interdependent, and majority children can benefit as much as minority children from multicultural education. (KH)

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EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY

THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

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UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Inaugural Lecture

EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY:

THE CHALLENGE

OF

CULTURAL PLURALISM

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26 February 1982

I.S.B.N. 0 85359-088-5

CONTENTS

1. Introduction: education as a social process Page 1

2. Education and social continuity: conformity vs. diversity 3

3. Education, industrialisation and social democracy 7

4. Education and cultural pluralism 9

   (a) Education and social class 12

   (b) Education and ethnicity 13

5. Multicultural education 15

   (a) The particular needs of ethnic minority children 16

   (b) The needs of all children in a multicultural society 19

6. Conclusion 21

References Page 22

1. Introduction: education as a social process

During 1981, four major reports appeared which were devoted to 'multicultural education'; prestigious reports, published by the Schools Council[1], the Government-appointed Rampton Committee[2], the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee[3], and Keele University[4]. The World Yearbook of Education was devoted to it[5].

There were also other significant developments in education: a £9 million DES programme on the use of micro-processors in schools was initiated, for example. Proposals appeared on the education of 16-19 year olds. A variety of measures relating to falling school rolls, and to contraction at primary, secondary and tertiary levels came into effect. There was continuing discussion of the teaching of shortage subjects. But the problems of race, erupting in the summer riots, and of the educational implications of a multiracial (or as it is more generally called, a multicultural) society were a predominant theme. A symposium called Education in the 'Eighties: the central issues, edited by Professors Brian Simon and William Taylor[6] was also published in 1981, and it took the five themes of contraction, work and leisure, equality, our relationship to the European Community, and race as being likely to generate fundamental questions for educational policy-makers during the coming decade. 1981 ended with Lord Scarman's Report on the Brixton Riots[7], and again, there was a section on what teachers and teacher-trainers might learn from these events.

In education, which is by far the most extensive of the social services, each year sees the rise of fresh enthusiasms: the devising of new remedies for old problems, the identification of new problems, and the discarding of tried solutions. In recent years, we have had the designation of 'educational priority areas' and a focussing of attention on educational disadvantage[8]; a major report on language policy in schools[9]; detailed national appraisals of the performance of the primary and secondary systems[10], and of the relationships of the school to its local community[11]; new recommendations on handicapped children[12]; and a continuing discussion of the content and organisation of the curriculum[13]. Multicultural education is the most recent of these focal points of educational debate - at least it was until the

appearance of the Cockcroft Report[14] on the teaching of mathematics in January 1982.

But in all the flow of practical policy questions in education, we must inevitably look for some pattern, and one perspective is to view education as a social process in which provision relates to the powerful structural and ideological pressures of the wider society. I am thinking here of the changing social and economic structure, and of changing social and political ideologies; those broader currents which lie rather below the surface of everyday events, but which may largely shape the course of educational policy.

I will not deny the role of expediency, an unexpected spark of ingenuity here, a touch of more than average incompetence there; what H A L Fisher might have called 'the interplay of the contingent and the unforeseen'. Educational development has its share of such phenomena. But on the whole, the discussion of educational provision is sterile if we take no account of those social, economic and political factors from which it may have emerged.

The analysis of such variables and of their operation in the changing pattern of educational provision is elusive, nonetheless. For example, the first great waves of New Commonwealth immigration in the 1950s and 1960s led to some special provision for English language teaching in schools, but to very little more. The prevailing ideology at that time was that these children would quickly assimilate and take their place in British society. Twenty years on, the change in social structure is still relatively slight — perhaps 5-6% of the population are members of identifiable ethnic minority groups, possibly reaching 10% by the end of the century — but the prevailing social and political ideology is now no longer so strongly assimilationist in flavour, hence the much greater interest in providing what is called 'multicultural education'.

To take another example, it might well be argued that the twentieth century growth of a huge sector of service industries and professionals stimulated the development of secondary education, and the flow of much greater numbers of young people into GCE and CSE examination courses: a clear response to structural change. But the continuing evolution of

an egalitarian political ideology may have been equally powerful in raising parental aspirations for their children, and encouraging them to stay on to take public examinations. Both structural and ideological variables appear to be operating here.

It is certainly the case that an egalitarian political ideology carried through a reorganisation of secondary education along comprehensive lines; and the doctrine of equality of educational opportunity might be thought to have been reflected during the 1960s and 1970s in a range of educational developments: the reform of ability streaming in primary — and to some extent in secondary — education; a concern for closer home-school relations, and for more sophisticated systems of pastoral care and school welfare provision; and a movement for greater accountability in education, including the reform of school governing bodies which is giving the local community a greater say in the running of its schools.

A good deal of the interest in multicultural education may be related to a concern for equality of educational opportunity in the same way. More than fifty studies of the school performance of children of New Commonwealth origin, compared with that of white children, have been carried out in Britain since the early 1960s, up to and including that of the Rampton Committee in 1981[15]. The underlying assumption, stated explicitly in most cases, has been that comparable schooling outcomes should not only be possible but that they are also profoundly desirable.

2. Education and social continuity: conformity vs.diversity

I imagine that few would resist the conclusion that educational change almost invariably follows social change, and rarely precedes it; and to my mind, policy recommendations for increasing the scale of resources here or for modifying techniques there can frequently be related to broader developments of a structural or ideological kind — sometimes representing a national consensus and often the interplay of conflicting pressures of one sort or another.

A further aspect of this question is to say that the greater part of the educational enterprise in any society is likely to be concerned with

social continuity rather than social change; with the cultivation of those cognitive, affective and social skills which a society values, and which is achieved not simply through the stated curriculum but also through a 'hidden curriculum' which may convey the concepts of planning, persistence and problem-solving, notions of power and authority, or patterns of social differentiation[16]. We are told that this so-called hidden curriculum may be embodied in the layout of desks or the question and answer techniques of teachers; that this is the way in which the social relationships — and in particular, the social hierarchies — of the marketplace, the factory and of bureaucracy are reproduced from generation to generation.

On the other hand, while schools quite clearly devote much of their efforts to social, economic and political continuity, they do also contribute to change. They generate an output of social criticism in each generation, and an element of original thinking across a broad spectrum. It is perhaps too simple an analysis of the social process to argue that education has only a conservative function, and this brings me to the central question with which I am concerned in this paper. To what extent does schooling aim to promote similarity in its clients, and to what extent does it foster individual differences? How far is it concerned simply to reproduce the type rather than allowing for individual growth beyond the type? How important is education for diversity?

This must obviously vary according to the parent society. A prevailing social and political ideology which emphasises conformity is likely to be reflected in school practices which minimise individualised learning; a more liberal regime may do the opposite. All societies strike a balance somewhere along the continuum. Is education regarded primarily as a social or an individual good? Does the educational system generally seek to foster uniformity or to celebrate variety?

In terms of my earlier comments, it seems self-evident that social continuity is likely to be the main aim of all educational systems; but in highly industrialised societies, and particularly in social democracies, continuity includes the capacity to initiate and adapt to change — a paradox. Even so, there will be limits. How far can diversity

be pursued before social cohesion is put at risk? Diversity may be preferred to conformity, but without a good measure of agreement there is likely to be social breakdown. As Durkheim put it in his celebrated analysis of social solidarity, societies with a highly developed division of labour do generate an internal interdependence; but without a core of common beliefs and sentiments - a 'collective conscience' - they must disintegrate.

Issues such as these have a long history, with origins in political and social theory and their related disciplines. Here there is an emphasis upon individualism, the essential goodness of man, man as the raw material of society; there we find a more pessimistic view, a greater concern for socialisation and social control, and a belief that society comprises more than its constituent members. For Rousseau, "man is naturally good, and only by institutions is he made bad"(17), and for Spencer the nature of society can only be explained by "the nature of its component individuals"(18). But quite opposite views were held by Hobbes for whom life in a state of nature is a war of all against all, "nasty, brutish and short"(19), and by Comte who claimed that "society is no more decomposable into individuals than a geometric surface is into lines, or a line into points"(20).

But the antithesis of individual and society is, of course, artificial and unrealistic. While society may be more than a collection of individuals, individuals are only fully human as members of society. Even Durkheim, who argued that the properties of groups are independent of the characteristics of their individual members, came to believe that social control operates from both outside and within individuals; that external moral obligations also become internalised, that in this sense society is, as he put it, "something beyond us and something in ourselves"(21).

Echoes of this ancient disputation about the relationship of the individual and society appear, as we might expect, in the philosophy of education, and consequently in discussions about the school curriculum and educational policymaking. Those who have argued that the word 'education' derives from educare - to train or to mould - have been opposed by those who prefer educere - to lead out. The former, in the

tradition of Hobbes and Durkheim, have stressed social conformity, the reproduction of the type, and a curriculum emphasising instruction, obedience and the acquisition of knowledge. The latter, who represent the child-centred tradition, following Rousseau or Froebel, have preferred self-expression, individual curiosity and creativity, and a curriculum embodying choice.

Again, these are 'ideal types' (or models), and reality lies somewhere between them. The education of the individual implies the existence of society. [illegible] education and definition of a child's inner resources is socially derived; and as Professor Peters has put it, "the 'potentialities' of the individual can only be developed within the framework of some socially structured pursuit into which he has to be initiated"(22).

Educational planning must obviously take account of both the individual and societal aspects of the equation, and the balance which is struck will vary from place to place as it has from time to time in our own society. The closing decades of the last century, for example, found Britain with a newly extended franchise, facing increased economic and military competition from the rising powers of Europe, North America and the Far East. No surprise then that W E Forster, in introducing the 1870 Education Act, which greatly extended elementary schooling, concluded his speech:

> "Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our individual prosperity ... the good, the safe working of our constitutional system ... [and] also our national power".(23)

No mention here of individual needs. Not much in the Spens Report either, some seventy years later, in 1938:

> "Speaking broadly," it said, "the interest of the State is to see that the schools provide the means by which the nation's life may be maintained in its integrity from generation to generation ... there is the unformulated but very real demand of the community that the young shall grow up in conformity with the national ethos."(24)

But twenty years on, by 1959, the Crowther Report was reflecting the balance of individual and societal needs. Crowther regarded education as a human right, one of the social services to be provided by the

welfare state, and provided - as the Report put it - "regardless of whether, in each individual case, there will be any return". But education, it argued, is also a national investment, and while - as the Report said - "primacy must be given to the human rights of the individual boy or girl ... we do not believe that the pursuit of national efficiency can be ranked much lower - not least because without it the human rights themselves will not be secure"(25). Even the Robbins Report, which certainly regarded education as an investment in a nation's future, argued that "the goal is not productivity as such but the good life that productivity makes possible."(26)

The 1977 Green Paper, as many will recall, reflected an unease about the responsiveness of the educational system to national economic needs. But even this Report placed first in a list of educational aims, "to help children develop lively, enquiring minds"(27), and this objective was carried through into last year's DES curriculum document(28) which summarises the current orthodoxy as follows:

> "Since school education prepares the child for adult life, the way in which the school helps him to develop his potential must also be related to his subsequent needs and responsibilities as an active member of our society " (para 3).

Quite a subtle blend.

3. Education, industrialisation and social democracy

Up till now, I have argued that education may be viewed as a process devoted largely to ensuring social continuity, but also to engendering social change. A process linked to broader structural and ideological variables, and varying with time and place according to the emphasis which is placed upon the development of the individual as compared with the interests of society. I have recalled the reflections of social theorists, educational philosophers and educational policy-makers upon this fundamental - and essentially political - question; and I have noted that while the dichotomy is an unreal one, and that education is generally felt to be both a social and an individual good, the balance as I say does vary from time to time and place to place.

For me, as I have already suggested, the most interesting aspect of the dichotomy at the present time is the extent to which we are educating for diversity rather than for social cohesion, and this is bound to be a central dilemma in a society such as our own which is highly industrialised, democratic, and culturally plural. May I take each of these in turn. A highly industrialised society requiring many thousands of different skills, characterised by constant technological change (and therefore social change), and with a national labour market, requires an educational system which can generate a wide range of competencies, the capacity to adapt to change (but also to contribute to it), and the willingness to be geographically and socially mobile. Our schools therefore foster individualised learning: individual assignments in the primary school; and a wide range of options at secondary level, with an increasingly sophisticated system of guidance and counselling to help match individual interests and aptitudes to a complex range of opportunities. Individual creativity, whether in writing, the arts curriculum, the sciences, or PE is encouraged. Great stress is placed on individual assessment and individual achievement, institutionalised through a massive system of public examinations.

But the national requirement for similarity as well as difference remains: much teaching is class and group teaching; we have uniforms, and school assemblies. In recent years there has been a strong movement towards an agreed core curriculum, and away from what have come to be regarded as over-extended option systems offering an excessive range of choice and early specialisation. Central government has taken a firmer hold on the curriculum, hitherto regarded as the province of LEAs, schools and individual teachers, and an Assessment of Performance Unit has been established by the DES to monitor standards in basic subjects. Industry, too, has expressed interest in the schools maintaining a broad curriculum for all, allowing for greater flexibility in the work situation. And there is no shortage of critics who claim that even the seemingly most individualised learning strategies still embody powerful systems of control.

The second of my three categories, social democracy, no less than industrialisation, sets the schools a problem in balancing education for diversity with education for conformity. The essence of our political

ethic is respect for persons, regarding each individual as an end in himself; and a great part of British schooling is concerned with the cultivation of individual judgement, the fullest development of an individual's abilities, a willingness to accept personal responsibility for personal decisions. Few attributes, in fact, are rewarded as highly as an independent critical capacity in our educational system. If originality is out of reach, an informed scepticism will do.

Set against this there are all the devices traditionally used to cultivate team spirit, school pride, corporate responsibility. Non-conformity is only tolerated within the limits set by existing codes and established hierarchies. Independent critical judgement has always to be informed by an awareness of existing orthodoxies. This is individualism within a social context. For Mannheim, education in a democratic society offers, "equal attention ... to the spontaneity of the person and to the significance of the environment in which this person grows"(29).

4. Education and cultural pluralism

However, it is when we come to consider the third characteristic, cultural pluralism, the mosaic of norms and values contained in a single society, that the tension between conformity and diversity in education is at its greatest.

A society possessing a relatively homogeneous culture, with little variation of belief or practice, is likely to share the universal concern for social continuity which I have sought to describe. And if that society is industrialised and democratic, it may also have a commitment to social change. Its schools may seek to convey standards of accomplishment, ingenuity, diligence and sincerity beyond those to be found in the homes, offices and factories in the streets outside. But where a society has a more heterogeneous culture, and those streets contain a variety of family types, religious and moral codes, even spoken languages, what then? Is the school to make provision for all these variations? Or should it ignore them, and concentrate on its more conservative function, and seek assimilation?

The interesting thing is that it is quite difficult to find an example of a relatively homogeneous culture. Virtually all societies are culturally plural. Many have religious variations: they may be predominantly Roman Catholic, with Protestant and other minorities; Protestant, with RC and Jewish minorities; Jewish, with Muslim and Christian minorities; Muslim, with Hindu and Christian minorities. All but the very smallest have regional variations: urban/rural, small town/large city, highland/lowland. Most industrialised societies have subcultures based on age: who will deny the reality of a distinctive adolescent subculture, for example, in complex societies like our own? Indeed, the rate of technological and social change is now so great that intergenerational differences of all kinds have come into existence. All such societies are stratified by social class, with distinctive life-styles and life-chances; and many are vertically divided by ethnicity, a sense of peoplehood, which may even be rigidified into impermeable caste divisions. A recent survey has identified no less than 73 such ethnic groups in Europe, on the basis of a distinctive culture, language, consciousness, and sometimes a distinctive political status and territory too[30]. The Basques, Flemings and Lapps are merely the most well-known of these. Another survey has located 862 ethnic groups in the world as a whole[31]. Indeed, according to Connor (1972) only 12 out of 132 independent states in 1971 could be considered ethnically homogeneous[32].

Cultural pluralism in Britain has existed for quite some time, centuries in fact; but it has become more widely recognised with growing egalitarianism, and with the greater acceptance of individual autonomy in all aspects of behaviour and belief. The greater informality in dress and in social relationships generally, the use of regional accents on radio and television, the rise of Welsh and Scottish nationalism, these are among the more obvious examples which reflect these ideological changes. Structural changes, such as social mobility, the continuing population drift from north to south, and New Commonwealth immigration must also have contributed to a growing recognition and acceptance of cultural pluralism in Britain.

There have also been worldwide expressions of ethnicity, the greater awareness of cultural identity and cultural traditions - a so called

'ethnic revival' - and there is no reason to suppose that Britain has been immune to these global trends. The long-standing inter-ethnic conflict in N.Ireland has taken on a new ferocity, but it has been paralleled on every continent: Quebec, Cyprus, Central Africa.

In education, cultural pluralism has always been recognised to some extent. So far as religious differences are concerned, the right of parents to withdraw their children from morning assembly or RE lessons, or to place them in specifically denominational schools, has existed for many years. The community education movement has been associated with rural reconstruction, as well as with the special needs of inner urban districts and suburban overspill estates - a recognition of locality differences. The appointment of parent governors; and the proposals for devising school curricula which are more closely related to local social conditions are the most recent forms of this kind of pluralism in education. And we should not forget that some schools in Wales have long since taught through the medium of Welsh, where that is the local spoken language.

As to age-related subcultures, schools everywhere are age-specific, a recognition of special needs which we take completely for granted. Indeed, until recently, tripartite secondary education was taken for granted, a nation-wide system based on the distinctive needs of what were felt to be three broad 'types' of adolescent identified by educational psychologists and enshrined in the Hadow, Spens and Norwood Reports of forty and fifty years ago. That form of education for diversity was eventually found unacceptable for it was felt to limit life-chances for too many children, and to maintain impermeable social class subcultures. The diversity offered by tripartite secondary education was too crudely formulated, and post-war egalitarianism sought more equal opportunities of becoming unequal. It might also be thought to have failed to provide an adequate flow of talent for an expanding economy.

The pendulum thus swung away from diversity in secondary education towards the common secondary school. 'Comprehensive reorganisation' was ideologically and structurally more in tune with social needs, and seemed to offer promise of greater social cohesion. But the antithesis of cohesion and diversity remained, and the common secondary school in

turn generated elaborate internal provision for the varied needs of its pupils - through banding, streaming and grouping, and extensive programmes of options. These developments, it will be recalled, were accompanied during the 1970s by the proposals of Bantock and of Midwinter for distinctive styles of education for working class children[33]; and these, in turn, were followed by proposals such as those of Lawton for a 'common culture' curriculum followed by all children, but allowing for differing levels of achievement[34].

A great deal of this recent history therefore seems to me to reflect the continuing attempts of the educational system to cater for cultural pluralism; and in particular, to strike an acceptable balance between educating for difference and educating for similarity, for diversity and also for consensus.

(a) Education and social class

Social class has been an important part of the debate because class forms a basic aspect of cultural pluralism in British society; and as I have tried to indicate, because of the continuing concern to equalise educational opportunity. The controversy over what, in the 1960s and 70s was called 'cultural deprivation' is a useful illustration.

In trying to explain the persistence of working class under-achievement in primary and secondary schools, many theorists argued that these children were suffering from 'culture clash'. The language, ethos and life-experience of schools and teachers were said to be so different from those of their working class pupils as to put them at a considerable disadvantage. They were, it was said, 'culturally deprived', and they needed compensatory education to make up for their deficiencies. Others have since claimed that such children are different rather than deficient. And some have talked in terms of biculturalism, suggesting, for example, that working class children be educated in standard English and in the value orientations of school; but that they should also be encouraged to make use of their own dialect and life experience, and take pride in them.

In terms of the antithesis of diversity and conformity, this example seems to typify the argument. On the one hand, we may hold that all cultures - working class/middle class, urban/rural, RC/Protestant - have intrinsic validity, and embody an intricate and often distinctive network of norms, values and traditions. A social democracy, committed to liberty and equality, is committed to diversity; and our schools have a prime responsibility to recognise and to further it.

On the other hand, in the interests of social cohesion and the survival of society, we may argue that children possessing varying home cultures must also be helped to acquire linguistic, cognitive and social skills of broader value. Indeed, without such skills they will be at a considerable handicap in education, and in the occupational and other opportunities linked to educational achievement. 'Different' or 'deficient', they must not be disadvantaged. In this sense, education for conformity in a social democracy is the means to the fullest exploitation of diversity.

The challenge of cultural pluralism to which I refer in the title of this paper is that in each generation we have to update our knowledge of the diversity within our society, incorporating this into our educational provision. Secondly, we have to reach agreement about the nature of educating for conformity, and this is more than simply a pedagogical task, it is essentially political. The dominant culture - be it middle class, Protestant, or whatever - is likely to be taken as the norm to which members of other cultures must conform; lip service may be paid to the notion of an inter-cultural 'melting pot', but this is rarely the reality. For educationalists, the problem is to decide upon the minimum level of acculturation necessary for full participation in society, and the maximum extent to which diversity might be encouraged.

(b) Education and ethnicity

So far, I have argued that cultural pluralism sets the sternest tests for our political ideals in presenting a tension between education for diversity, and education for consensus. I have suggested that few societies are culturally homogeneous, and that

social class is a predominant source of pluralism almost everywhere. But as I indicated earlier, we frequently find vertical social divisions too, the pluralism of ethnicity: a sense of peoplehood, of cohesive traditions, usually with distinctive religious and linguistic characteristics, sometimes with a regional basis, but almost always cutting across the horizontal stratification of age and social class.

Ethnic variations have always existed in Britain. Apart from the Scots and Welsh, and the various English tribes of earlier times, there have been Irish and Jews in Britain since the Middle Ages, and black people since at least the sixteenth century. As I suggested earlier, migration and changes in the climate of opinion here and abroad are among the factors which have led to the fuller recognition of ethnic and other forms of pluralism in more recent times.

But of all forms of cultural pluralism, it is ethnicity which currently offers the greatest challenge, for migration from overseas has undoubtedly added greater cultural variety than can be found, say, in the spectrum of social class. There is consequently a rather greater concern about social cohesion, and a sharper debate about the balance of diversity and conformity.

Nonetheless, it is worth recalling some of the past principles and practices of cultural pluralism in British education, in the new context of greater ethnic variety. We already recognise differences relating to pupil age, religion and language in many of our schools and teacher training institutions. We allow for locality differences through school governing bodies. Tripartite secondary education was structured on a premise (specious though it proved to be) of aptitude difference. Awareness of class-related variations in language code, upbringing and perception is now part of the professional equipment of all young teachers.

Ethnic variations are no different in kind, for they include religion, language, community participation, and family background. The issues relating to conformity are also very similar: comprehensive

reorganisation replaced separatism by a common secondary school with the aim of providing both a better basis of social cohesion and also greater individual opportunity. The debate about class differences in education has been much concerned with the question of which culture working class children should be required to assimilate to, and with the ethics and practicality of biculturalism and bidialectalism. All this can be precisely paralleled in terms of the education of ethnic minority children, but the issues are more sharply defined and the dilemmas more tantalising.

5. Multicultural education

First, let us be clear about the scale of the question. As I indicated earlier, perhaps three million British residents belong to identifiable ethnic minorities, of whom a large and increasing proportion were born here. They cover a very wide range: well over half a million from Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain and elsewhere in Europe; perhaps one million from the West Indies, India and Pakistan; and about one-third of a million from New Commonwealth territories in Africa, the Mediterranean and the Far East. These figures exclude 700,000 people born in the Irish Republic, and some 400,000 Jews mostly born here.(35)

The overall figure of around 5-6% of Britain's total population is very small compared, say, with that of Australia where some 20% of the population are from non-English speaking overseas cultures.(36) On the other hand, this 5-6% is not evenly distributed. Chain migration, and the availability of work and cheap accommodation has attracted newcomers to the urban centres and particularly to Greater London and the West Midlands, where the proportions may be much greater. At the 1971 Census, for example, 15% of the population of Islington N. (in London) were born in the New Commonwealth, and 6% in Ireland; while in Birmingham, 20% of the population of Ladywood were from the New Commonwealth. Individual localities may have much greater percentages(37).

But while not evenly spread, ethnic minority communities now exist in many parts of Britain. The Maltese live mainly in London, but communities of two hundred or more exist in half-a-dozen cities; the Chinese are mainly in London and Liverpool, but small communities may

be found in more than twenty other urban centres from Plymouth to Edinburgh; while the Cypriots are spread yet more evenly from Brighton to Glasgow. Outside London, there are communities of one thousand or more Italians in six British cities, and of Poles in nine or ten[37].

The educational implications of these random figures would seem to be two-fold: first, that ethnic diversity has created particular needs in many primary and secondary schools in urban areas where there are sizeable minority communities; and second that the national spread of ethnic minorities means that all children are going to encounter them in adult life, if not before, and that they therefore need fuller preparation for growing up in a multicultural society. Let us take each in turn.

(a) The particular needs of ethnic minority children

The particular needs of ethnic minority children may be illustrated by the Inner London Education Authority's latest language survey. Published in December 1981, this shows that 14% of all the Authority's children (some 45,000) speak a tongue other than English outside the classroom - 131 different languages in all, headed by Bengali, Turkish and Greek[38]. Nor is linguistic diversity restricted to the metropolis. Current research at London University shows that 27% of Peterborough's primary school population, for example, have some competence in 43 languages other than English, principally Punjabi and Italian.[39]

Apart from the loss of a valuable national resource if linguistic talents of this kind are allowed to dissipate, it may also be the case that the education of such children will be retarded if their fluency in the mother tongue is not utilised by teachers. Furthermore, it may be argued that to individual community groups the loss of the mother tongue will weaken the mother culture, including religious faith. This in turn may give rise to intergenerational stresses within the family; and, most serious of all, to a loss of identity in a society in which full acceptance of ethnic minorities is not always readily accorded. Culture maintenance is important.

As the Bullock Report, an authoritative statement on language in education put it:

> " ... No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold". (40)

There is therefore rising pressure for mother tongue teaching, and for some extension of 'O' and 'A' level programmes in modern languages to take account of the needs particularly of Asian pupils, languages which are at present largely taught outside mainstream education in evening and weekend supplementary schools. There is also some pressure for separate schooling for Sikh and Muslim children. As we have seen, there are precedents for all these kinds of provision in our educational system, and given our traditional commitment to education for diversity the case has been made. There are, of course, logistical questions: are the specialist teachers available, and is there yet any national provision for training them? Will there be viable teaching groups anywhere outside the main centres of non-English speaking minority communities?

Then there are the more difficult aspects of education for diversity in an ethnically plural society. What mother tongue is to be taught in each case: a standard version? Or the regional dialect used by the particular minority community? Secondly, mother tongue is probably best taught alongside mother culture, just as we have traditionally taught French language together with French literature and civilisation. But what <u>is</u> the mother culture of Pakistani children born and brought up in Preston, or Italians raised in Bedford? The cultural traditions of these minority communities may well be distinctive, and many children may be partially or even fully bilingual. But such communities are unlikely to have the more hierarchical, sexist and rural characteristics of the regions of origin. These are questions for minority group leaders as much as for educationalists.

As I have argued, education for diversity is always paralleled by education for social cohesion. Up till now, this has meant the provision of special tuition in English as a second language, and

continuing language support across the curriculum for ethnic minority children; little more. With the greater recognition and acceptance of cultural pluralism, a frankly assimilationist policy has moved more in the direction of biculturalism: equipping minority group children with the language and other skills essential for living in modern Britain, but nonetheless, recognising, accepting, respecting, and encouraging the development of other cultural forms brought into school by them.

This, of course, precisely parallels the earlier suggestions of a bicultural approach to the education of children of diverse social class backgrounds.

Now, in talking about the particular needs of minority children (as compared with the educational needs of all children) in an ethnically plural society, I have taken children from non-English speaking homes as presenting the clearest examples of the problems and opportunities which arise. But very similar issues arise with West Indian schoolchildren who do speak English and were mostly born here. Creole dialects may retard school progress unless they are used as a resource by teachers. These dialects, like the Asian, African and European languages of other ethnic minority children, offer the same link with cultural traditions and provide the same basis of communal pride.

This diversity, I would contend, is again a valuable community asset, for it may engender self-respect and a sense of identity in what, for all of us who live in large-scale and complex industrial societies, is an increasingly stressful and alienating social environment. But as with the debates about working class and regional dialects, West Indian children clearly require a capacity to speak and write fluently in standard English; they must be bidialectal, and adding to the child's language repertoire in this way may provide the necessary basis both for social cohesion and for equality of opportunity for individual achievement.

So much for a few brief remarks on the particular needs of ethnic minority children. It will, I think, be clear that the blending

of diversity and uniformity, reproducing the type but allowing for differentiation, raises all the familiar issues (but more sharply) than in the case of religious, regional and social class differences. At the policy level the debates have been at least as fierce. Within the profession, the initial and in-service training of teachers have been slow to respond; and at the level of classroom practice and school organisation, the many opportunities have yet to be fully grasped.

(b) The needs of all children in a multicultural society

When we come to the second category, what education should be offering all children in a multicultural society, as distinct from the particular needs of minority group children, the difficulties are just as great but the opportunities just as attractive. If we are concerned about tolerance and social harmony, about the reduction of conflict and the building of bridges, there are clear implications for the curriculum, for staffing, and for books and materials. On the face of it, this is an argument for social cohesion, and indeed it is. But by learning more about and paying greater respect to minority cultures (and by learning more about the varied origins of the majority culture), we are in fact cultivating an intelligent appreciation of diversity.

As I mentioned earlier, proposals for a 'common culture' curriculum have attracted a good deal of attention during the past decade, seeking to provide a balanced programme for all children up to the age of sixteen. It has been argued that exposure to perspectives such as the mathematical, the scientific, the linguistic or the social and political are essential for all children - not just the most able who formerly attended grammar schools. Differentiation should come through the level of individual achievement in each of these areas, and not through streaming between or within schools. So while allowing for diversity, this is an argument for consensus in a class stratified society.

If we now take account of cultural pluralism, we need to add no new elements to the common culture curriculum for all children,

but simply a greater awareness of pluralism. For example, work in the humanities would take fuller account of the variety of minority cultures in modern Britain, underscoring their intrinsic worth; sometimes including examples of minority literature, art, music, drama; and extending the range of modern language and R.E. teaching - for the benefit of all pupils. Schoolwork in history, but also in science, mathematics and religion could hardly avoid reference to the diverse origins of European civilisation. A more conscious effort would be made to highlight the cultural assumptions and ethnocentric perspectives of each area of the curriculum.

How many teachers have been aware for some time past of the need to make more explicit the overseas origins of British culture; to counter ethnocentrism, prejudice and even racism in their work with all children. The avoidance of history textbooks presenting a blatantly one-sided view of world events; or of syllabuses which only reflect European literature, religions, exploration, art or scientific discovery, is not new. But nor is it as basic an aspect of professional competence as one might expect in the 1980s, and this is something which is in urgent need of review by teacher trainers(41).

The opportunities for enriching the curriculum for all children thus seem almost limitless, although the road is not always an easy one. What is one to do, for example, about the social, national, sexual or ethnic stereotypes to be found in school books and other materials? Are Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe or Dickens' Oliver Twist to be excluded? Should the class snobbery of P G Wodehouse, the jingoism of Kipling, or the sexism of Scott Fitzgerald be rendered suspect? A slippery path!

The point, perhaps, is that nothing should be taught unthinkingly and uncritically; cultural assumptions can be placed in their social and historical context, and ethnic stereotypes can provide a basis for open discussion just as dialect variation can be a rich source in the teaching of English. While some materials may need to be

brought up to date, the case is less one of censorship than for the exercise of a more sophisticated level of professional skill.

A common culture curriculum of this kind is for all children in a multicultural society. As I have said, those from the majority culture will meet and work with, during their lifetimes, members of ethnic minorities - most of whom were born here. What can be more important than that these relationships are based on mutual understanding and respect, whether children have grown up in the Cotswolds or in Coventry, in the all-white areas of rural England or the more cosmopolitan streets of the conurbations?

They will also be continually in contact, through the mass media, with peoples overseas, in a world which is more interdependent than ever; and the cultivation of a greater understanding of this interdependence, and of a greater respect and tolerance for other ways of life is a further dimension of the question.

6. Conclusion

I must now briefly draw these thoughts to a close. In this paper I have sought to argue that education may be viewed not simply as pupils and teachers, classrooms and textbooks, but as a process devoted mainly to providing for social continuity and also to engendering social change. I have suggested that this process is linked to powerful structural and ideological variables in the wider society; and that it may vary according to the importance placed upon individual development compared with the perceived needs of society. Both are important, indeed, they are inseparable; we have it on good authority, as well as from the evidence of our senses. But a particularly interesting aspect of this dichotomy is the way all educational systems must strike a balance between educating for variety and educating for conformity, providing for difference and for similarity, ensuring diversity but also cohesion.

I have noted that diversity is more likely to be pursued in complex, industrial societies; and that social democracies in particular will foster it. But it is cultural pluralism - and especially ethnicity -

which produces the greatest tension between educating for diversity and educating for consensus; for not only is a plural society, by definition, more diverse, but it also has both a greater need for conformity and a greater natural resistance to it.

Here in Britain, educationalists have to address themselves to both tasks: the celebration of this enriching new diversity, and the conveying of a core of common beliefs and sentiments (Durkheim's 'collective conscience'). This represents a substantial challenge. For educationalists have to decide at what point the acculturation necessary for full participation in society becomes a repressive assimilation; and at what point the celebration of diversity ceases to enrich and becomes potentially divisive.

Finally, I have also tried to suggest that while diversity and conformity will ever exist in a continuing tension, they are interdependent. For ethnic minority children, acculturation is the means to the fullest exploitation of diversity, and this acculturation must also strengthen social cohesion. For majority culture children, a curriculum which conveys greater knowledge and respect for minority cultures may contribute to social cohesion, at the same time as it engenders a more intelligent appreciation of diversity.

Equally, for ethnic minority children, culture maintenance - the celebration of a heritage - can bring the enrichment of living in two worlds. For majority culture children, a decrease in ethnocentrism may bring similar rewards.

Only a free society gives rise to such curious parallels, to such testing paradoxes, and to such excruciatingly difficult problems of educational theory and practice. But I imagine that few of us would have it otherwise.

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